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# Letters to The Editor

## *The Onassis-Gilpatric Letters*

I'm curious as to what ethical principle is being reflected by the prestigious and respected Washington Post in the coverage of the story of the Jackie Onassis letters to Roswell Gilpatric. To convey the story of his successful efforts to keep the letters from public notice and then blithely publish the contents of the letters seems a cheap and irresponsible treatment of what must be to them both a personal and painful private matter. Does a newspaper have a responsibility for protecting one's right of privacy—or do you recognize it at all?

ED OVEREND.

Bethesda.

The Washington Post hit a new low with the publication of that story by Maxine Cheshire about the letters of Jackie Kennedy to Roswell Gilpatric. If that wasn't the acme in bad taste, I don't know what to call it.

What useful purpose do you think was served by printing the story? Now I know you will say, "Well, you read the story, didn't you?" Yes, I did read it, but I ought not to have been able to read it, because it ought not to have been there for me to read. It was and is a strictly private matter between the two parties concerned. It is none of your business; it is none of my business; it is none of anybody's business except the two concerned.

I hold no brief for the Kennedys and I was never a great admirer of them, but I can readily understand Mrs. Onassis' deep concern when she learns that the letters

have become public, and it is easy to understand Mr. Gilpatric's anguish too.

I don't know of any newspaper that is more self-righteous than The Washington Post, or any newspaper that shouts any louder about individual rights, but when it comes to someone else's rights that you think might interfere with your vaunted freedom of the press, then it's a different story.

If the time ever comes in this country, and it might come sooner than any of us now thinks, when freedom of the press is restricted, you can thank yourselves and others like you for the irresponsible way in which you use freedom of the press.

Every day The Washington Post gets just a little shoddier and shabbier, with stories like this one and more columns from Von Hoffman.

F. W. MILLER.

Silver Spring.

Regarding your article, "Jackie and the Purloined Letters," by Maxine Cheshire, I would like to express my concern that a paper of your caliber would publish stolen personal letters. In my opinion, ethical considerations would mandate publication of the facts of the theft without disclosing the contents of this personal correspondence. Even if Maxine Cheshire is eager for a "scoop," it seems to me that ethical standards should have prevailed. The public "right to know" does not extend to personal "purloined letters."

MARILYN VOIGHT.

Chevy Chase.